



PHOTO & CAPTION

Linking Villages to the World



Photo: USAID/Jay Sorensen

Schoolchildren in the Romanian village Iana cheer after seeing the telecenter's new Internet connection in action.

In remote areas of Romania, there are far fewer telephones than the national average. In many villages, not a single family has a fixed or mobile telephone, and the Internet is something seen only as part of a TV show.

To address this issue, USAID has launched a technology initiative that establishes communication and resource centers serving more than 12,000 people in four isolated villages. These telecenters offer low-fee services to residents, such as faxing, photocopying, word processing, email, Internet access and business development. Private telecommunications operators provided equipment to connect

the centers to the public network, and Microsoft donated software for the computers.

In the village of Balasesti, Peace Corps volunteers helped establish an association of carpet producers who now sell their crafts to buyers in the United States and elsewhere.

The pilot project was so successful that the Romanian government has decided to replicate the model in at least 150 new locations throughout the country.